

CDC Takes Measures to Address 9/11 Health Concerns

Monday, 17 March 2008

New York, NY – Yesterday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that it will issue a solicitation for sources to provide federally-funded medical monitoring and treatment to thousands of 9/11 responders who live outside metropolitan New York City. (Click [here](#) for a copy of the CDC's announcement.) In December, the Administration suddenly announced that it had abandoned plans to create such a program. At the time, the CDC expressed concerns over the availability of continued funding, even though Congress was in the process of approving another \$108 million for 9/11 health care.

According to the federally-funded World Trade Center Health Registry, people from all 50 states and 431 of 435 Congressional districts nationwide were in lower Manhattan on or after 9/11 and now have serious concerns about their health. In all, more than 10,000 of the 71,000 people enrolled in the Registry live outside the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Senators Charles Schumer and Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Reps. Carolyn Maloney, Jerrold Nadler, and Vito Fossella, who for months have urged the Administration to restart the program, hailed today's announcement.

"Though the scars of September 11th are still visible in lower Manhattan, the reach of that attack extends across the country, where thousands of first responders who live outside of the New York metropolitan area need medical assistance for conditions stemming from their service," Schumer said. "From Buffalo to Birmingham, and Syracuse to San Diego, we must ensure that these brave men and women receive the care they need and deserve."

"Today's announcement is long overdue, and represents the first step in the process of working to secure federally funded treatment and monitoring for those responders outside of the New York City area," said Senator Clinton. "We welcomed the assistance of thousands from around the country in our hour of need, and it is imperative that the federal government now assist those who are experiencing adverse health outcomes in their hour of need."

"It's good news that the Administration is finally taking action to help thousands of ailing 9/11 responders who live outside the tri-state area," said Rep. Maloney. "The national 9/11 health program should never have been interrupted in the first place, but it can never be too late to help the heroes of 9/11. In the months ahead, we will be working to make sure that the national program and the clinics here in the New York area get the funding they need to provide care for everyone whose health was compromised by the 9/11 attacks."

"In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, America stood with New York, and many came and put their own lives and health at risk by aiding in the rescue and recovery efforts," said Rep. Nadler. "Now, many of those brave responders are sick, and they need our help. The Bush Administration has already lost valuable time by delaying the start of the nationwide program. I am encouraged that they have restarted the process, and I hope they will award a contract soon. While we can never repay the debt we owe to the brave 9/11 first responders – wherever they are from – we must do all that we can to help them."

Fossella said, "This is good news for the thousands of men and women who relied on these programs for monitoring and treatment. It made no sense to eliminate these programs and leave our unsung heroes without access to the care they need. We worked across party lines to make a compelling case for the continuation of these programs, and I am pleased that the Administration agreed to continue funding them."

In its announcement, the CDC noted that its request “represents an unusual and compelling urgency from the Government.” Indeed, existing funding for treatment programs outside metro New York, primarily provide by charitable donations from the American Red Cross, are expected to end in the next few months.

The CDC is encouraging interested firms to respond to today’s announcement by April 2nd.

The CDC’s announcement states that “there is currently a program in place to provide periodic health assessment examinations, diagnosis, and treatment to the responders in the New York City (NYC) area. CDC intends to award a one year contract to provide comparable services to those responders outside of the NYC area. As the program grows in the next year, the number of responders outside of the NYC area could increase to 6,000 members from its current level of approximately 4,000 members.”

Background

President Bush’s budget proposal for this year (FY 2009) includes a 77% funding cut for 9/11 health care programs, from \$108 million appropriated for FY ’08 to \$25 million for FY ’09. On January 23rd, NY and NJ delegation members sent a letter to President Bush asking him to ensure that 9/11 health clinics, with programs that are estimated to cost more than \$200 million this year alone, are fully funded in his FY ’09 budget.

The president’s budget last year (FY 2008) had also included only \$25 million for 9/11 health programs. Members of Congress from New York and New Jersey fought to exceed the president’s FY ’08 request and ultimately delivered \$108 million in the regular federal budget for sick and injured 9/11 responders and area residents, workers and students, plus another \$50 million for 9/11 health in an emergency spending bill.

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